

Abstract:

A system where collateral information in a file or image is used together with information concerning a particular user's characteristics to direct a user to a particular web site. A user is direct to a web site and presented with information based both upon the original collateral information and information from the data base of users characteristics. In one embodiment, a file or data stream includes collateral data that identifies the URL of a central web site. When a file containing the collateral data is transferred to a browser, the central web site is accessed and it interrogates a data base containing various information. The output of the data base search is another URL that directs the browser that received the original collateral data to another web site which then sends information to the user. In an alternate embodiment, a user uses a hand held digital camera to gather information from images such as magazine covers or product boxes. The images contain digital watermarks that carry collateral data. The collateral data is used to interrogate either a local or a remote data base which contains information pertinent to the particular user's characteristics.